

e-Child Care Feasibility Study Project Charter



Approved by Key Stakeholder Committee August 18, 2004:

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The purpose of this *Charter* is to define and document the understandings between the Executive Steering Committee and the e-Child Care Project team regarding the project definition, scope, roles and responsibilities, management commitment, project deliverables, and overall project schedules.

Problem Statement(s)

(What started this project, what problem(s) are we trying to solve?)

Lack of standardized, accessible, and timely information to support the operations of ESA child care services leads to subsidy overpayments, lack of accountability, delay in services, and insufficient communication methods. This all compromises the health and safety of the children.

Project Statement

(A quick overview of the project in 15-20 words.)

The e-Child Care Feasibility Study will analyze the viability and achievability of procuring a system that will:

- Improve services delivery processes,
- Enhance health and safety for children in child care,
- Improve program integrity and accountability, and
- Enhance program information and intelligence

for Washington State's ESA child care services.

Business Drivers/Background

(Reasons for recommending the project, including background information, business problem, etc.)

ESA administers and delivers Washington State's largest child care subsidy program and regulates licensed child care centers and family homes. The subsidy program has a budget of about \$275 million per year and serves 65,000 children per month through services provided by 60 Community Services offices statewide. Currently, ESA provides ongoing regulatory services to about 2,000 licensed child care centers and 7,000 child care family homes requiring on-site visits and documentation of compliance to policies.

Subsidy Issues

Proactive Quality Assurance audits of the subsidy program in FY 2003 discovered \$3.25 million in child care provider and client overpayments currently being recovered through the Office of Financial Recovery. The major causes for these overpayments are the result of billing errors due to limitations and deficiencies within the current case management and payment systems. Examples of problems inherent in the current systems are:

- Reconciliation of authorization and payment is not automated and is very labor intensive.
- Systems do not record child attendance.
- Existing systems cannot check that hours billed are the hours during which the child was care for.
- The systems allow incorrect billings and payment for child absences and half-day attendance.
- The system allows duplicate billings and overbilling for partial months of care provided.
- Systems allow providers to bill for more children than allowed by licensed capacity.

The new e-Child Care system will support subsidy business rules and be flexible and efficient in authorizing services and payments. This is expected to significantly reduce overpayments caused by the present outdated applications.

Licensing Issues

Child care licensers do not have an information management system that supports their regulatory responsibility. Licensers use paper on field visits and manually input their findings and reports at the office. The licensing information contained in the current system is not easy to access, retrieve, or manage. The current system has a limited capacity for recording and retrieving the results of monitoring visits and tracking investigation and inspection issues. These system limitations impact the ability of the licensers to perform their jobs.

The new e-Child Care system will support licensing business rules and integrate licensing information to support the regulatory functions of the child care licensers.

Vision

(The idealistic view of what business will be like after the project is completed.)

The e-Child Care Project will create an environment that supports efficient and accurate subsidy payments and promotes healthy and safe licensed child care service. Information will be readily available to manage our child care programs.

More specifically, the solution should:

- Support speedy and accurate payments based on business rules and policies,
- Minimize and streamline manual processes and paperwork,
- Provide real-time data entry and retrieval,
- Reduce redundant data entry,
- Promote efficient and effective communication between ESA programs, authorizing workers, child care clients, providers, and licensors,
- Facilitate mandatory and ad hoc reporting, and
- Provide integrated and complete information.

Overall, the project sponsors envision a system that is easy to learn, use, and support; will grow with the organization; and is designed to promote high-quality child care service delivery.

Goal Statement

(A high-level statement that provides the overall context for what the project is trying to accomplish)

The goals of the e-Child Care Project are to facilitate public access to information, client record management, provider record management, regulatory management and payment process solutions customized to promote ESA's child care service delivery.

ESA's child care service delivery is intended to support high-quality child care for the diverse children and families of Washington State.

The e-Child Care Project is working to build strong accountability systems in order to ensure program integrity.

In addition, the e-Child Care Project is working to leverage today's current technologies to simplify processes such as:

- Licensing,
- Eligibility,
- Enrollment,
- Client record keeping,
- Provider record keeping,
- Attendance tracking,
- Payment processing, and
- Federal reporting.

Objectives

(Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound, concrete objectives for achieving the goal)

This project has six objectives that will help define the goals and vision:

1. Integrate data to provide complete, accurate, and timely information.
2. Support policy development and planning.
3. Meet mandatory reporting requirements.
4. Serve families and providers while allowing for outcome measures for those within the regulated child care system.
5. Enable stakeholders with different technical capabilities and diverse information system environments to have access to required common information.
6. Enable a reliable method to meet current and projected state and federal funding requirements.